



Department of Planning, Building and Code Enforcement
801 North First Street, Room 400
San José, California 95110-1795

Hearing Date/Agenda Number:
P.C. November 29, 2004 Item: 7.c.1
& 2

File Number:
GP04-10-02/GPT04-10-02

Council District and SNI Area:
10

Major Thoroughfares Map Number:
128 and 141

Assessor's Parcel Number(s):
None

Project Manager: David Tymn

GENERAL PLAN REPORT

2004 Fall Hearing

PROJECT DESCRIPTION:

City Council initiated General Plan amendment and associated text amendment proposal to remove the Minor Arterial (80-106 ft. ROW) Land Use/Transportation Diagram designation on Winfield Boulevard from Coleman Road to Almaden Expressway and change this segment of Winfield Boulevard to a local street, and to change the Land Use/Transportation Diagram designation of McAbee Road from a Four-Lane Major Collector to a Two-Lane Major Collector between Almaden Expressway and Camden Avenue. An associated General Plan Text amendment (GPT04-03-04) request would revise Appendix E of the General Plan Text to be consistent with the proposed amendment to the Land Use/Transportation Diagram.

LOCATION: Winfield Boulevard from Coleman Road to Almaden Expressway and McAbee Road between Almaden Expressway and Camden Avenue.

ACREAGE: N/A

APPLICANT/OWNER:

City of San Jose/ City of San Jose

GENERAL PLAN LAND USE / TRANSPORTATION DIAGRAM DESIGNATION:

Existing Designation: Winfield Boulevard from Coleman Road to Almaden Expressway: Minor Arterial (80-106 ft. ROW).

McAbee Road between Almaden Expressway and Camden Avenue; Four-Lane Major Collector

Proposed Designation: Winfield Boulevard from Coleman Road to Almaden Expressway; local street

McAbee Road between Almaden Expressway and Camden Avenue; Two-Lane Major Collector

EXISTING ZONING DISTRICT(S): N/A

SURROUNDING LAND USES AND GENERAL PLAN DESIGNATION(S): (bridge location)

North: Almaden Lake Park, Los Alamitos Creek / Public Park and Open Space

South: Single-family detached residential, Los Alamitos Creek / Low Density Residential (5 DU/AC), Public Park and Open Space

East: Golf Course / Private Recreation, Non-Urban Hillside

West: Almaden Expressway

ENVIRONMENTAL REVIEW STATUS:

Environmental Impact Report to be adopted on November 29, 2004.

PLANNING STAFF RECOMMENDATION:

See Analysis and Comments

Approved by:

Date:

PLANNING COMMISSION RECOMMENDATION:

CITY COUNCIL ACTION:

CITY DEPARTMENT AND PUBLIC AGENCY COMMENTS RECEIVED:

- Department Of Transportation (see attached memorandum).
- Santa Clara Valley Transportation Authority (see attached memorandum).
- State of California Department of Transportation (see attached memorandum).
- Santa Clara Valley Water District (see attached memorandum).
- County of Santa Clara Roads and Airports Department (see attached memorandum).
- State of California Governor's Office of Planning and Research (see attached memorandum).

GENERAL CORRESPONDENCE:

32 items received (see attached): 27 in support and 5 in opposition.

ANALYSIS AND RECOMMENDATIONS:**RECOMMENDATION**

This General Plan amendment was initiated by the City Council in September 2003. The analysis of the proposed amendment has been completed by the Department of Planning, Building and Code Enforcement and the Department of Transportation and is presented in this report for consideration by the Planning Commission and City Council. The analysis identifies multiple advantages and disadvantages of the proposed removal of the General Plan Minor Arterial Street designation on Winfield Boulevard, which would result in the elimination of the proposed bridge over Los Alamitos Creek. In addition, the staff report describes the alternatives analyzed in the Environmental Impact Report (EIR), including various options for improving Almaden Expressway. Based on the direction from City Council to bring this amendment forward, Planning staff has presented the analysis for review and consideration and is not presenting a recommendation.

PROJECT DESCRIPTION

This is a City Council initiated General Plan amendment and associated text amendment proposal to: **1)** remove the Minor Arterial (80-106 ft. ROW) Land Use/Transportation Diagram designation on the segment of Winfield Boulevard that extends from Coleman Road to Almaden Expressway, and change this segment of Winfield Boulevard to a local street, and **2)** to change the Diagram designation from a Four-Lane Major Collector to a Two-Lane Major Collector on the segment of McAbee Road between Almaden Expressway and Camden Avenue, which forms the west leg of the Almaden Expressway/Winfield Boulevard intersection. The associated General Plan Text amendment request (GPT04-10-02) would revise Appendix E of the General Plan Text to be consistent with the proposed amendment to the Land Use/Transportation Diagram (see attachment of proposed text revisions to Appendix E at the end of this staff report).

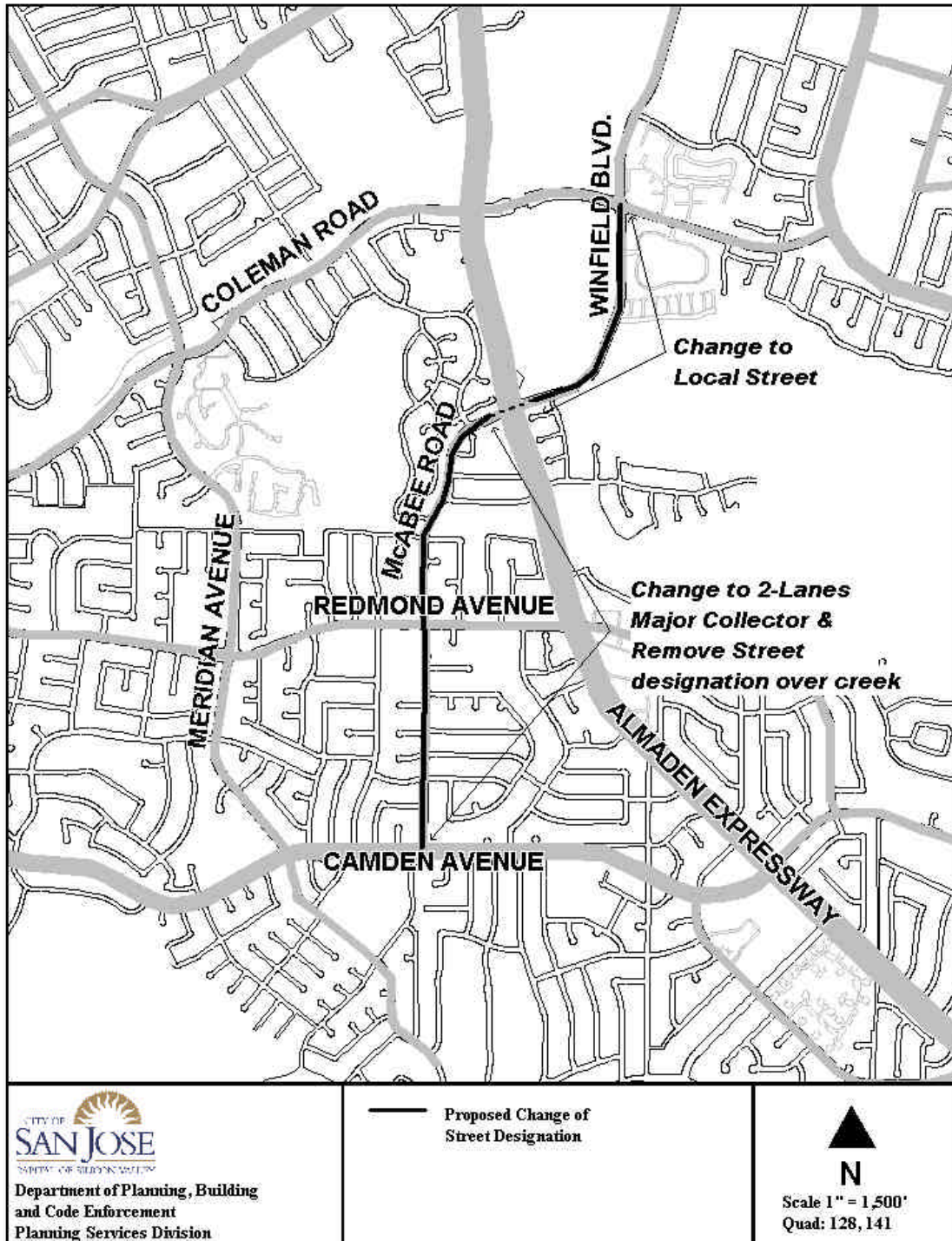
BACKGROUND

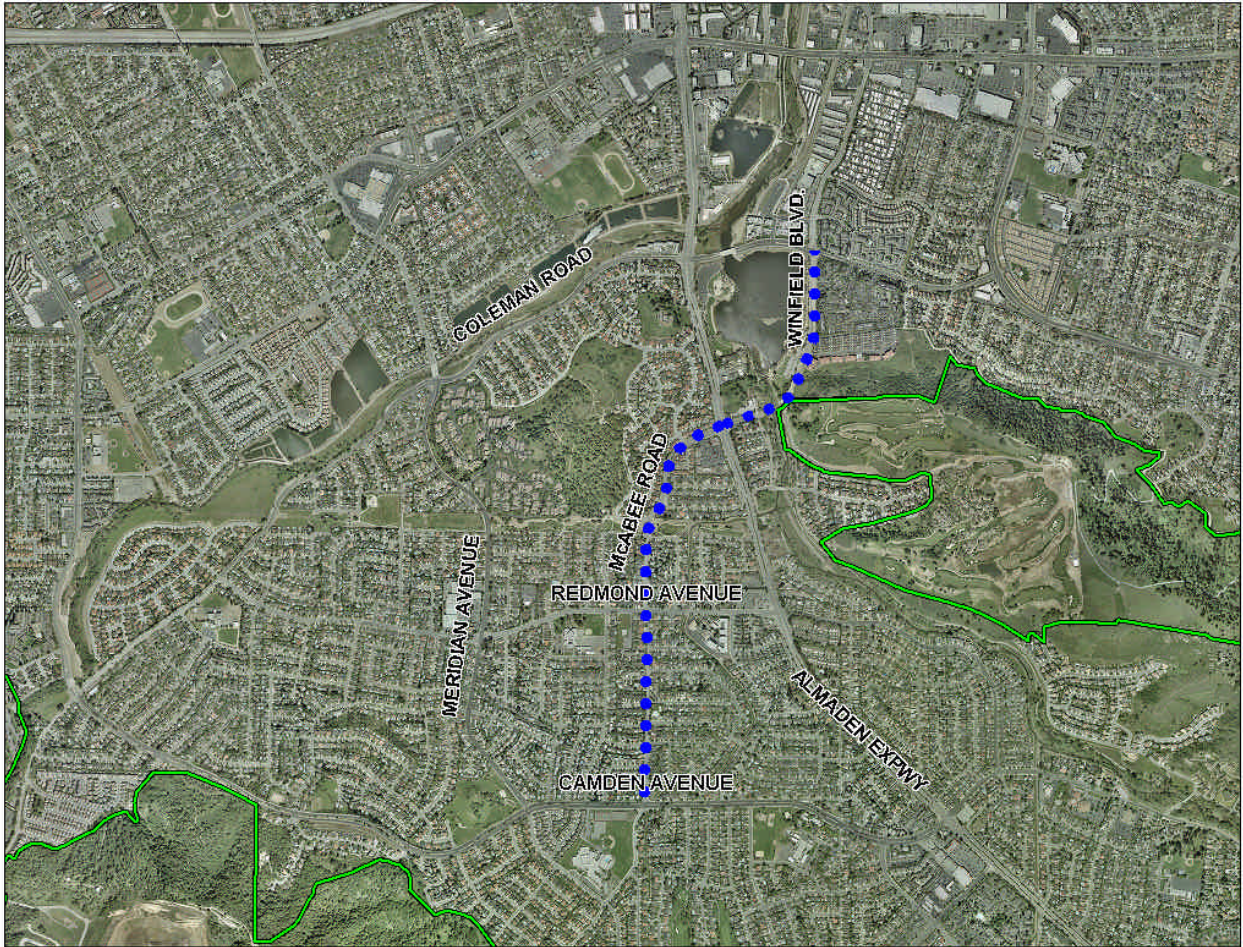
Location and Surrounding Uses

Winfield Boulevard is currently designated on the City's General Plan Land Use/Transportation Diagram as a Minor Arterial (80-106 ft. ROW) roadway between Chynoweth Avenue and Almaden Expressway. Under existing conditions, however, Winfield Boulevard functions as a discontinuous two-lane collector because it does not cross Los Alamitos Creek, but instead forms the terminus of two segments that are located on the southwesterly side and northeasterly side of the creek. The completion of Winfield Boulevard as a Four-Lane Minor Arterial has been an integral part of the planned roadway network in this area of San José, and has been on the Land Use/Transportation Diagram since at least the mid-1960s.

The subject General Plan amendment focuses on Winfield Boulevard where the northeasterly and southwesterly segments terminate at Los Alamitos Creek near Almaden Lake Park. If approved, there would be no possibility of a future connection for through traffic on this section of Winfield Boulevard. As a result, there would need to be a significant reduction in the planned vehicular capacity of Winfield Boulevard on the segment located between Coleman Road and Almaden Expressway, and on the segment of McAbee Road located between Almaden Expressway and Camden Avenue. There would be no physical change to these existing roadway segments if the General Plan amendment were approved.

GP04-10-02





The amendment proposes the following modifications to the Land Use/Transportation Diagram:

Winfield Boulevard Designation

Winfield Boulevard between Coleman Road and Almaden Expressway is currently designated as a Minor Arterial (80-106 ft. ROW), which is designated mainly for the movement of through traffic. The proposed amendment would change this segment to a local street, which has the primary function of providing access to immediately adjacent land. Local streets are not expressly identified on the General Plan Land Use/Transportation Diagram.

McAbee Road Designation

McAbee Road between Almaden Expressway and Camden Avenue is designated as a Four Lane Major Collector, which is designated mainly for internal traffic movements within an area and connects to the arterial system. The proposed amendment would change this segment to a Two Lane Major Collector, which would serve the same function, but with fewer lanes.

History of the Project

In 1994, the City of San Jose proposed a project to extend Winfield Boulevard as a four-lane arterial street, generally between Coleman Road and Almaden Expressway, including construction of a bridge over Los Alamitos Creek. The City received a protest on the Draft Negative Declaration issued for the project from the Almaden Hill Estates Homeowners' Association. A revised Environmental Assessment/Initial Study (EA/IS) was prepared to include some project modifications to address various neighborhood concerns raised in the protest, particularly with regard to traffic safety, noise, and light/glare impacts.

The revised EA/IS and Negative Declaration were circulated to the public. The City received a formal protest of the revised Draft Negative Declaration from a citizens group known as the Coalition Against the Winfield Expansion Project. The protest challenged the validity of the revised Negative Declaration, based on a variety of concerns including the following: the fact that there was no representative on the City Council for District 10 at that time; the benefits of the project versus impacts to the community were not clear; pedestrian and vehicular safety were questioned; growth-inducement was seen to be a possibility; consideration of alternatives was not clear; and air quality, noise impacts of the proposed sound wall, light and glare from the proposed traffic signal, impacts along Los Alamitos Creek (including noise and riparian impacts), adequacy of mitigation, hazardous materials, and cumulative impacts were not clear. Planning staff's review of the protest concluded that there was not substantial evidence that the proposed project, as modified and described in the revised EA/IS, would result in a significant adverse impact on the environment. At the protest hearing, staff recommended that the Planning Commission uphold the Negative Declaration.

On April 17, 1995, the Planning Commission upheld the protest of Negative Declaration, and, as a result, an EIR would have been required prior to project approval. Subsequently that year, in its review of funding priorities for transportation projects citywide, the City Council decided not to fund an EIR to proceed with the project at that time, but to postpone the project until the completion of the State Routes 85/87 interchange, which was completed in 2003.

In 2003, as part of the Valley Transportation Plan (VTP) 2030 process and in an effort to move forward with the project and to comply with the Valley Transportation Agency's (VTA) regional funding program, which encourages enhancing connectivity of local street system, the City's Department of Transportation staff proposed the Winfield Boulevard connection as a candidate project. Four million dollars (\$4,000,000) for the Winfield bridge project had been retained in the City's Traffic Capital Improvement Program (CIP). The City Council Building Better Transportation Committee opposed the proposal, based in part on the previous history of some neighborhood opposition to the proposed bridge. Another option was discussed for the Winfield bridge to consist of a bicycle/pedestrian bridge only with no vehicular access. The City Council's Building Better Transportation Committee also opposed this option.

As a result of these discussions, the City Council directed City staff to initiate a process to amend the General Plan Land Use/Transportation Diagram to clarify the status of Winfield Boulevard. As part of the 2004-05 budget process, funding was allocated to prepare an EIR to consider a General Plan amendment to change the Land Use/Transportation Diagram to remove the

Winfield Boulevard through connection. In addition, prior funding allocations to implement the Winfield bridge project were dropped from the City's Traffic Capital Improvement Program.

ANALYSIS

The following is a presentation of the advantages and disadvantages of approving the proposed General Plan amendment, to downgrade Winfield Boulevard resulting in the permanent removal of the proposed bridge project and foreclosing the future ability to complete Winfield Boulevard.

There are several reasons to justify approval of the proposed changes to the General Plan Land Use /Transportation Diagram:

1. The General Plan Land Use /Transportation Diagram designations include the potential for the bridge to be constructed that would result in an increase of traffic on Winfield Boulevard by allowing through traffic that does not currently exist.
2. The bridge connection would result in traffic and noise impacts along the easterly and southerly perimeter of Lake Almaden Park.
3. The bridge could require a sound wall on Winfield along Lake Almaden Park (potential visual impact).
4. The bridge would create riparian impacts to Los Alamitos Creek and trail corridor; however, these impacts could be mitigated at the time of construction.
5. Elimination of the potential for the bridge to be constructed would preserve the existing traffic conditions for the local residents on Winfield Boulevard in that no through traffic would be possible.

There are also several reasons to justify no change to the General Plan Land Use /Transportation Diagram:

1. Bridge construction would improve overall circulation in Almaden Valley for vehicles, bikes, pedestrians, and emergency services.
2. Bridge construction would decrease congestion along Almaden Expressway at Coleman Road, Blossom Hill Road and State Route 85. The intersection at Almaden/Blossom Hill is currently at Level of Service (LOS) "F". With the construction of the bridge, these intersections would continue to operate at LOS "F", but the cycles (signal wait time) would be shortened.
3. The bridge connection would decrease peak-hour Almaden Expressway volumes by approximately 600 trips (13%) near Blossom Hill Road and by 1000 trips (19%) near Coleman Road.
4. A five-second reduction in the LOS delay at Almaden/Blossom Hill would be the average reduction for all vehicles traveling the intersection in the peak hour. Considering that about 7,500 vehicles travel through the intersection in the peak hour and about 75,000 vehicles

travel the intersection a day, five seconds is a significant benefit.

5. The “user annual time savings” associated with the Winfield bridge were estimated by the Department of Transportation to be \$550,000 per year. An estimated bridge investment of \$4,000,000 would therefore “pay for itself” within 8 years. This is considered an excellent rate of return for a transportation improvement.
6. Persons making approximately 10,000 trips per day would use the Winfield bridge and would benefit from shorter travel distances and shorter signal wait times.
7. Almaden Expressway improvements are part of the VTA’s regional transportation master plan, referred to as Valley Transportation Plan 2030 (VTP 2030). These improvements include expressway widening from Coleman to State Route 85, and State Route 85/Almaden interchange upgrades, and have an estimated cost of approximately \$40 million. Further expressway widening to Winfield is possible. Further expressway widening can offset deletion of Winfield, but conditions on Almaden Expressway would remain at “F”. The best traffic solution to ease roadway congestion is both Almaden Expressway widening and a Winfield Boulevard connection.
8. An estimated investment of \$4,000,000 to construct the bridge yields a better investment in relieving signal wait cycle times than does an estimated \$40,000,000 cost for improvements to Almaden Expressway.
9. Overall, there would be a benefit to a relatively small number of people — local residents — if the bridge were not constructed, versus the benefits to a much larger number of people in the general citywide population if the bridge were constructed.
10. Construction of the bridge would help complete the City’s transportation network and provide vehicular circulation in the future, which could help avoid additional traffic on neighborhood streets.
11. The Winfield bridge connection and a Winfield through connection may be needed to support future development in the Coyote Valley and South Almaden Valley, and deletion at this time may be premature.

Another option that could be explored is a reduced scale Winfield Boulevard with a two-lane street that could utilize the General Plan Major Collector designation. The environmental effects from this option were not specifically analyzed in the EIR but would generally be expected to be similar to the No Project Alternative in that Winfield Boulevard would still be constructed in the future with a bridge over Los Alamitos Creek, but with a two-lane configuration, and potentially more room for bicycle and pedestrian facilities. Should the Planning Commission and City Council have interest in this approach, the proposed General Plan amendment would have to be denied or deferred so that staff can prepare supplemental environmental analysis to provide environmental clearance for consideration of this option at a future date.

Policy Consistency

The subject General Plan amendment to remove the Arterial Street designation proposal is consistent with the following Major Strategies, Goals, and Land Use Policies in the *San Jose 2020 General Plan*:

1. *Urban Conservation/Preservation Major Strategy*. This Strategy recognizes the importance of sustaining viable neighborhoods. Residents have a need to belong to a neighborhood or an area with community identity that promotes civic pride and a concern for the community. Neighborhood participation through citizen organizations and local improvement activities is essential to maintaining San José's quality of life. This amendment would serve the nearby neighborhood in that it would prevent future through traffic on Winfield Boulevard.
2. *Community Identity Goal*. Enhance the sense of community identity in San José.
3. *Community Identity Policy No. 3*. The City should foster the participation of residents in local government decision-making and in the social, cultural and recreational activities of the community.
4. *Neighborhood Identity Policy No.1*. Neighborhood groups should have input to the decision-making process in City government.
5. *Riparian Corridors and Upland Wetlands Policies No.1*. Creeks and natural riparian corridors and upland wetlands should be preserved whenever possible.

However, the subject General Plan amendment proposal is inconsistent with the following Major Strategies and Land Use Policies in the *San Jose 2020 General Plan*:

1. *Sustainable City Major Strategy*. This strategy seeks to reduce traffic congestion, pollution, wastefulness, and environmental degradation of our living environment. By conserving natural resources and preserving San José's natural living environment, the concept of sustainability becomes a means of encouraging and supporting a stronger economy and improving the quality of life for all who live and work in San José.
2. *Level of Service Policy No. 1*. The City's urban service delivery priorities should be ordered as follows:
 - i. Provide services and facilities designed to serve existing needs.
 - ii. Prevent the deterioration of existing levels of service.
 - iii. Upgrade City service levels, when feasible.
3. *Transportation Policies, Thoroughfares; Policy No.1*. Inter-neighborhood movement of people and goods should occur on thoroughfares and is discouraged on neighborhood streets.
4. *Transportation Policies, Thoroughfares; Policy No.3*. Public street right-of-way dedication and improvements should be required as development occurs. Ultimate thoroughfare right-of-way should be no less than the dimensions as shown on the Land Use/Transportation Diagram except when a lesser right-of-way will avoid significant social, neighborhood or environmental impacts and perform the same traffic movement function.

5. *Transportation Policies, Thoroughfares; Policy No.7.* The traffic impacts on regional transportation facilities should be taken into consideration when reviewing major General Plan Land Use/Transportation Diagram amendments.
6. *Air Quality Policy No. 2.* Expansion and improvement of public transportation services and facilities should be promoted, where appropriate, to both encourage energy conservation and reduce air pollution.

ENVIRONMENTAL REVIEW

An Environmental Impact Report (EIR), entitled, *Winfield Boulevard and McAbee Road General Plan Amendment*, was prepared for the proposed project and provides environmental review to address and evaluate the environmental impacts of the project appropriate for the adoption of the proposed General Plan amendment. The Draft EIR (DEIR) was circulated from August 20 to October 4, 2004 for public review and comment on the adequacy of the environmental review during this time period.

The DEIR analyzed the project and its environmental setting and identified potentially significant environmental impacts. The DEIR identified “Significant Unavoidable Impacts” regarding Land Use, Transportation and Air Quality. The DEIR identified “Significant Unavoidable Cumulative Impacts” regarding Air Quality and Traffic.

Cumulative Impacts

Cumulative impacts, as defined by CEQA, refer to two or more individual effects, that when combined, are considerable, or that compound or increase other environmental impacts. Cumulative impacts may result from individually minor, but collectively significant projects taking place over time. The purpose of the cumulative analysis is to allow decision makers to understand better the potential impacts that might result from approval of past, present, and reasonably foreseeable future projects, in conjunction with the proposed project.

The EIR concludes that the proposed amendment would have a significant, unavoidable cumulative impact on Air Quality and Traffic. The combined effect of the 55 currently pending or recently approved General Plan amendments could have a significant cumulative impact on Air Quality and Traffic and the proposed project could substantially contribute to this impact. Adoption of the proposed amendment will make a cumulatively considerable contribution to existing congestion, both citywide and in the immediate area of the project site.

The proposed project results in a significant, unavoidable cumulative air quality impact. The cumulative effect of approving and implementing all proposed General Plan amendments would be to add population not included in the Clean Air Plan (CAP) and will result in cumulatively significant areas of congestion. The proposed General Plan amendment, which conflicts with the directive that the local plan (i.e., General Plan) should demonstrate reasonable efforts to implement the transportation control measures (TCMs) in the Bay Area Air Quality Management District (BAAQMD) Guidelines, will contribute to cumulatively considerable impacts to regional air quality.

The significant unavoidable impacts identified to result from the proposal are as follows:

1. The proposal would have a significant indirect land use impact, because future development already contemplated and allowed under the General Plan assuming the presence of Winfield Boulevard may not be able to conform to the City's Level of Service (LOS) policy, i.e., development applications consistent with the General Plan may not be approvable.
2. Implementation of the proposed General Plan amendment is expected to increase overall peak direction (southbound) traffic volumes on the roadway segment of Almaden Expressway south of Coleman Road by 23.98 percent, which is significantly above the transportation LOS E/F Link Analysis significance threshold of 1.5 percent.
3. The proposed General Plan amendment conflicts with the Air District's directive that the local plan (i.e., General Plan) should demonstrate reasonable efforts to implement the TCMs in the BAAQMD Guidelines. This policy conflict is considered a significant air quality impact.

Project Alternatives

CEQA requires that an EIR identify alternatives to a project as it is proposed. The CEQA Guidelines specify that the EIR should identify alternatives which "would feasibly attain most of the basic objectives of the project but would avoid or substantially lessen any of the significant effects of the project." The purpose of this section is to determine whether there are alternatives of design, scope or location which would substantially lessen the significant impacts, even if those alternatives "impede to some degree the attainment of the project objectives," or are more expensive.

The project proposes two changes to the General Plan Land Use/Transportation Diagram:

1) change the designation of Winfield Boulevard between Almaden Expressway and Coleman Road from Minor Arterial (80-106 ft. ROW) to local street — this change would eliminate the possibility of a Winfield Boulevard bridge being constructed; and 2) change the designation of McAbee Road from Major Collector-4 Lanes, to Major Collector-2 Lanes. The objective of the City Council initiated proposal is to preclude a vehicular bridge connection across Los Alamitos Creek in order to prevent traffic from Almaden Expressway from traveling on Winfield Boulevard to reach Coleman Avenue and areas to the northwest. By precluding the bridge connection that would allow through traffic on Winfield, the proposal would meet the objective of substantially reducing traffic on Winfield Boulevard south of Coleman Road, as compared to the amount of traffic that would occur under the existing General Plan. This change would protect the residential character of the neighborhood.

Alternatives required by CEQA to be considered should, therefore, be capable of avoiding or lessening some or all of these impacts. Consideration of a "No Project" alternative is mandatory. A two-lane Winfield Boulevard bridge was considered as an alternative to the proposal, but it would not meet the objective of precluding through traffic from using Winfield Boulevard between Almaden Expressway and Coleman Road. Additionally, the two-lane Winfield Boulevard bridge alternative would not provide sufficient traffic capacity to completely reduce the traffic impact to Almaden Expressway. For these reasons, it is not considered further in the following discussion.

Alternative A: No Project (no change to the General Plan)

The completion of Winfield Boulevard as a four-lane arterial has been an integral part of the planned roadway network in this area of San Jose and has been shown in the Land Use/Transportation Diagram since at least the mid-1960s. Although the bridge connection is not yet constructed, this roadway network configuration is included in the City's long-term TRANPLAN model and represents the "Base" against which the project's impacts and other General Plan land use amendment proposals were evaluated. The traffic discussion in Section II, B of the EIR, provides a detailed long-term analysis of traffic under the Base/No Project scenario.

Under the No Project Alternative, the Winfield Boulevard extension over Los Alamitos Creek could still be constructed at some time in the future, to provide the roadway infrastructure needed to serve future development envisioned in the Land Use/Transportation Diagram of the General Plan. Therefore, the project's significant unavoidable indirect land use impact would be avoided under the No Project Alternative.

The No Project Alternative would have eventual impacts from construction of the proposed Winfield Boulevard extension and bridge over Los Alamitos Creek. The Draft Environmental Assessment/Initial Study prepared for the extension in 1994 found that construction of the roadway extension would result in impacts to biological resources of Los Alamitos Creek, noise impacts, hydrology and flooding impacts, light and glare from the proposed traffic, air quality impacts, hazardous materials impacts, and land use impacts. Mitigation measures were identified to reduce all of these impacts to a less-than-significant level. However, the Planning Commission determined that an EIR would be required prior to consideration of a project to construct the roadway extension. Such an EIR has not yet been prepared and would still be a requirement prior to construction of a bridge for completion of Winfield Boulevard extension.

No Project Alternative Conclusion

The No Project Alternative would avoid the three significant unavoidable impacts of the proposed project. Implementation of the No Project Alternative would have impacts resulting from construction of the roadway that would not result from proposed project. The No Project (With Bridge) Alternative does not meet the objective of the project to preclude a vehicular connection over Los Alamitos Creek to reduce traffic on Winfield Boulevard south of Coleman Road and on McAbee Road, to protect the residential environment at the adjacent residential areas and Almaden Lake Park.

Alternative B

An alternative scenario was conducted for the General Plan amendment analysis that included improvements to Almaden Expressway along with the removal of the Winfield Boulevard bridge connection, in order to offset the project's traffic impact on Almaden Expressway. Specifically, this alternative includes the proposed project (reducing potential traffic capacity of Winfield Boulevard and removing the potential for a bridge connection, and reducing potential traffic capacity of McAbee Road) together with widening Almaden Expressway to four lanes in each direction between Blossom Hill Road and Coleman Road, per the improvements identified in the Santa Clara County Comprehensive County Expressway Planning Study (adopted August 19, 2003).

Also included in this alternative are improvements to the existing dirt pedestrian path that extends from the end of the west segment of Winfield Boulevard behind the Almaden Lake Park corporation yard, to a pedestrian/bike bridge across the creek that terminates on the Los Alamitos Creek trail approximately 100 yards north of the terminus of the east segment of Winfield Boulevard. This alternative would include paving this path so that it would be accessible by bicycles and providing better signage to clarify that the path provides access to the east side of Los Alamitos Creek, the Creek trail, and the east side of Winfield Boulevard.

Alternative B Conclusion

The addition of capacity to Almaden Expressway between Coleman Road and Blossom Hill Road proposed by this Alternative B is intended to reduce the negative traffic impact of eliminating the Winfield Bridge connection from the General Plan roadway network. The elimination of the bridge plus the widening would slightly increase Vehicular Miles Traveled (VMT), would reduce Vehicle Hours Traveled (VHT), but would also result in significant volume increases on four of the five link sets operating at LOS E/F. Alternative B would not, therefore, avoid or reduce the traffic impacts of the project. The additional capacity provided by the added Almaden Expressway lanes under this Alternative would result in Almaden Expressway and other nearby roadways experiencing generally similar Volume-to-Capacity (V/C) ratios as under Project Conditions. Alternative B would not increase capacity of affected roadways in the project area sufficient to offset the project's traffic impacts. Alternative B would still have a significant indirect land use impact, because future development allowed under the General Plan assuming the presence of Winfield Boulevard may not be able to conform to the City's LOS policy.

While Alternative B would not increase roadway capacity enough to offset the loss of capacity resulting from the project, the pedestrian/bicycle improvement included in Alternative B would enhance pedestrian and bicycle connectivity over Los Alamitos Creek, thereby conforming to BAAQMD TCM measures and General Plan policies related to pedestrian/bicycle connectivity.

As described above, Alternative B would not avoid or reduce to a less than significant level the three significant unavoidable impacts of the proposed project. For this reason, it is not an "environmentally superior" alternative. It should be noted that the City of San Jose has no jurisdiction over Almaden Expressway and any widening would need to be implemented by the County or with County approval. It is a feasible alternative. Given the current economic situation and the numerous County roadway improvements that were identified in the County Expressway Planning Study, the Almaden Expressway widening and improvements are not expected to be completed in the near-term without additional sources of funding. The City at their sole discretion could implement the trail improvement element of Alternative B.

Alternative C

A second alternative scenario was evaluated for the General Plan amendment analysis that included improvements to Almaden Expressway, along with the removal of the Winfield Boulevard bridge connection, in order to offset the impact of the project's traffic impact on Almaden Expressway. Specifically, Alternative C includes the proposed General Plan amendment (downgrading Winfield Boulevard and removing the bridge connection, and downgrading McAbee Road) together with widening of Almaden Expressway to four lanes in each direction between Blossom Hill Road and Winfield Boulevard. The widening of Almaden

Expressway was extended to Winfield Boulevard in this scenario to present the ideal configuration to offset the decreased capacity of the roadway system from the proposed project (the elimination of the Winfield Boulevard Bridge connection). The same analysis methodology that was used for the Project and Alternative B scenario was used for this Alternative C scenario.

Also included in this alternative are improvements to the existing dirt pedestrian path that extends from the end of the west segment of Winfield Boulevard behind the Almaden Lake Park corporation yard, to a pedestrian/bike bridge across the creek that terminates on the Los Alamitos Creek trail approximately 100 yards north of the terminus of the east segment of Winfield Boulevard. This alternative would include paving this path so that it was more accessible by bicycles and providing better signage to clarify that this was a path to access the east side of Los Alamitos Creek, the Creek trail, and the east side of Winfield Boulevard.

Alternative C Conclusion

The addition of capacity to Almaden Expressway between Coleman Road and Winfield Boulevard proposed by Alternative C is intended to reduce the negative traffic impact of eliminating the Winfield Bridge connection from the General Plan roadway network. As described above, the elimination of the bridge plus the widening would slightly increase VMT over Project conditions, would reduce VHT over Project conditions, but would also result in significant volume increases on four of the five link sets operating at LOS E/F. Using the City's thresholds of significance, therefore, Alternative C would not avoid the significant traffic impacts of the project. The additional capacity, however, provided by the added Almaden Expressway lanes under Alternative C would result in Almaden Expressway and other nearby roadways experiencing generally similar V/C ratios as under Base case/No Project Conditions, with two exceptions. The exceptions are the segments of Coleman Road between Winfield Boulevard and Almaden Expressway and McAbee Road west of Almaden Expressway. In general, the widening of Almaden Expressway to Winfield Boulevard decreases the V/C ratios on most roadway segments in the area (refer to Figure 9). Alternative C, therefore, would generally increase capacity of affected roadways in the project area sufficient to offset the project's traffic impacts. Alternative C would still have a significant indirect land use impact, because future development allowed under the General Plan assuming the presence of Winfield Boulevard may not be able to conform to the City's LOS policy, using the City's standard thresholds of significance for traffic impacts.

The pedestrian/bicycle improvement included in Alternative C would enhance pedestrian and bicycle connectivity over Los Alamitos Creek, thereby conforming to BAAQMD TCM measures and General Plan policies related to pedestrian/bicycle connectivity. While the increased capacity on Almaden Expressway under Alternative C would reduce congestion, this alternative would still remove a planned necessary arterial connection, which conflicts with BAAQMD TCM measure #12, Improve Arterial Traffic Management.

As described above, Alternative C would not avoid all of the project's significant traffic impacts, but it would generally increase roadway capacity to offset the project's impacts and would reduce the project's air quality impact. For these reasons, it is considered an environmentally superior alternative.

Again, it should be noted that the City of San Jose has no jurisdiction over Almaden Expressway and any widening would need to be implemented by the County or with County approval. It is a

feasible alternative. Given the current economic situation and the numerous County roadway improvements that were identified in the County Expressway Planning Study, the Almaden Expressway widening and improvements are not expected to be completed in the near-term without additional sources of funding. The City at its sole discretion could implement the trail improvement element of Alternative C.

PUBLIC OUTREACH

The property owners and tenants within a 1000-foot radius of the amendment site were sent a newsletter regarding the two community meetings that were held on October 6 and 7, 2004 to discuss the proposed General Plan amendment. Approximately ten people spoke on the item during the two community meetings. In general, the comments were in support of the proposal for the General Plan amendment and no additional traffic on Winfield Boulevard.

Notices were also sent for a Public Scoping Meeting for the Environmental Impact Report on July 29, 2004, and the notice of availability of the Draft EIR was also published in the San Jose Mercury News. Approximately twenty people attended the Public Scoping Meeting, and were generally in support of the proposal for the General Plan amendment. However, several members of the public did express disagreement with the proposal due to concerns about additional traffic on other roadway segments in the City's transportation network.

DOT and Planning staff made a presentation to the Almaden Valley Community Association (AVCA) meeting on November 8, 2004. At the Board meeting that followed, the AVCA Board voted 5 to 1 in favor of not changing the General Plan in regard to the proposed amendment. However, many community members were concerned about the widening of McAbee and questioned whether it would be necessary if the Bridge were built, assuming that there would be no increase in traffic on McAbee with the Bridge in place.

The owners and tenants also received a notice regarding the public hearings to be held on the EIR and subject amendment before the Planning Commission on November 29th and December 14th. In addition, the community can be kept informed about the status of amendments on the Department's web site, which contains information on the Environmental Review and General Plan processes, each proposed amendment, EIR status and documents, staff reports, and hearing schedule.

COORDINATION

This amendment and analysis has been coordinated with, and input has been received from, the Department of Transportation, the Office of Economic Development, and Parks, Recreation and Neighborhood Services.

Attachments:

Map

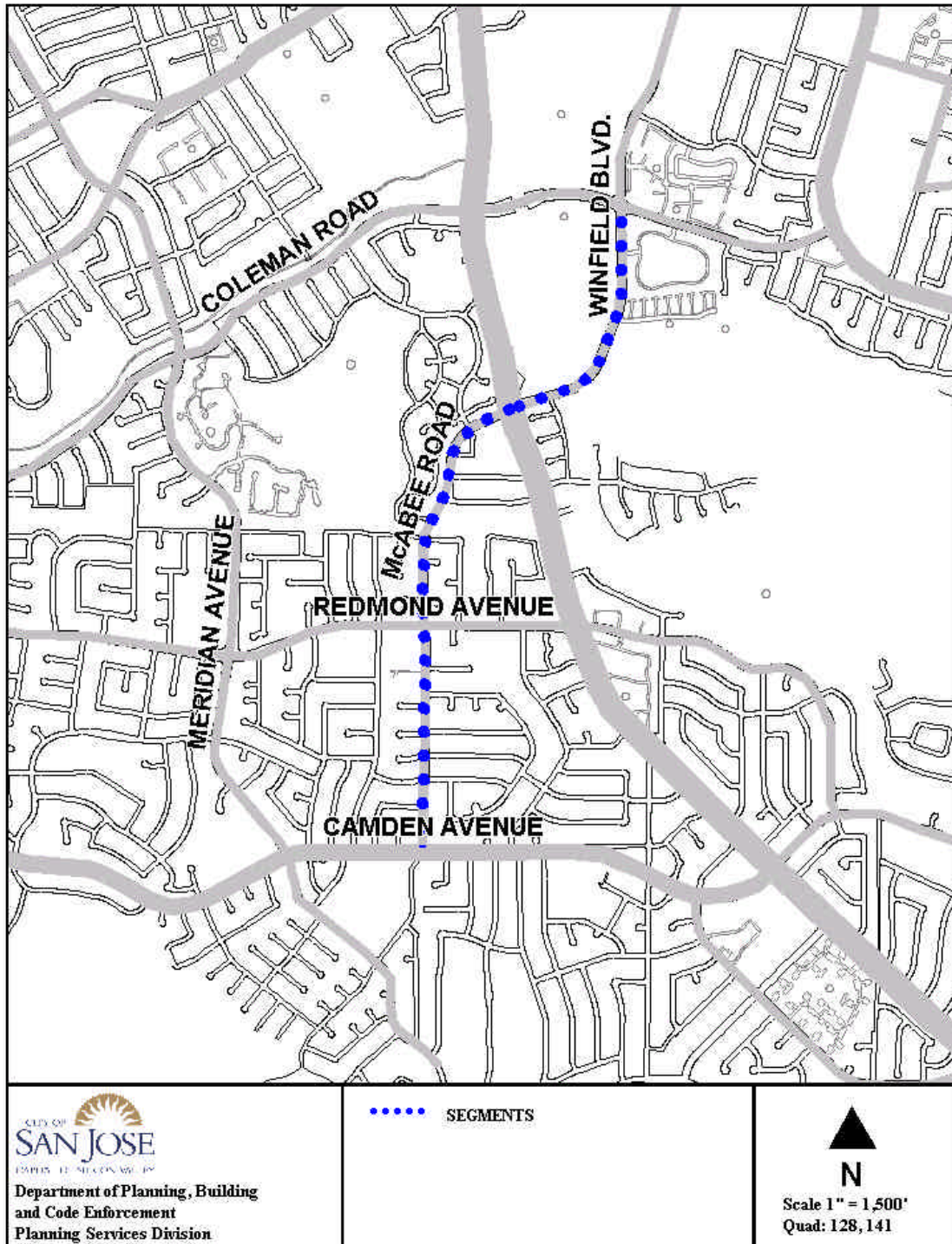
Proposed Text Change

Department and Agency Correspondence

General Correspondence

cc: Hans Larsen, DOT; Nanci Klein, OED; Yves Zsutty, PRNS

GP04-10-02 & GPT04-10-02



Proposed General Plan Text change to Appendix E:

APPENDIX E
MAJOR COLLECTOR STREETS

Street Name	Number of Travel Lanes Planned for Year 2020
Lucretia Ave.	Four Lanes
McAbee	Four Lanes <u>Two Lanes</u>
McCarthy Blvd.	Four Lanes